sumed by intestine broils—wasted by famine, or prostrated by pestilence—has commonly been virulent in its wickedness.

Society at these times acts like the seamen who, when the last hopes of saving themselves in the storm have vanished, betake themselves to a maddening intoxication, and drink of any exciting or oblivious draught that may banish reflection. The social affections are dried up for lack of that delicate tenderness which feeds them, and the selfish and malignant ones spring up on the wrecks of human prosperity, affording them suitable nourishment. On those dreadful coasts on which wrecks are for ever strewn, the inhabitants are tempted to light up fires to allure the vessels with their spoils to points at which they may be stranded, and their goods seized. It is a picture, on a small scale, of those states of society in which men oppressed with want feel that they cannot Letter their condition by sacrifices to virtue, and may easily improve it by crime.

There have been times of upheaval in the moral world similar to those periods which geologists describe, when the boiling igneous fluid from below has uplifted and upturned whole continents and ocean beds which had lain undisturbed for ages. The distinctions of rank, and between one man's property and another's, have disappeared, and, in the confusion, common minds feel a difficulty in keeping hold of the distinction between justice and injustice—so much are their outward badges reversed and confounded. The king is bleeding upon the scaffold; the nobles are depending on their own peasantry ; judges are prisoners at the tribunals over which they presided; the priesthood, so far from having power with heaven, are seen to be utterly helpless; cunning is overreaching sincerity ; might is trampling upon right; unblushing confidence is the surest means of success ; and bold but mean men are everywhere grasping honour

and authority. What would be prudence in ordinary circumstances is now the highest imprudence, and wisdom, with all its gravity is visibly inferior to folly. At these times vice will come forth without deigning to wear the garb of virtue; it stalks abroad, with its unblushing face unveiled, and its haggard arms laid bare, to find out and seize upon its victims ; and it immolates them with the one hand, while it lays hold of the spoil with the other.

The thefts, the incendiarism, the rapes, the murders, which